

Press release



Gérard Mégie, Chairman of the CNRS, Dies

It is with profound regret and deep sorrow that the CNRS learned of the death of Gérard Mégie, its current chairman, on June 5, 2004, at the age of 58, following an extended illness.

Chairman of the CNRS since November 2000, Gérard Mégie launched a major strategic initiative that laid the groundwork for the "Development Project" that provided the foundation for the first CNRS "action contract" with the French government, entered into in March 2002 and covering several years. Under his guidance, the CNRS Board of Directors adopted a public policy in June 2003, expressing the concern of the Board with the organization's precarious financial situation. In March 2004, Gérard Mégie and Bernard Larroutourou, Director General of the CNRS, presented their "Project for the CNRS" to promote change within the organization, which contributed significantly to the current debate on the future of French research.

As a participant in the creation of a European research space, Gérard Mégie was the initiator of the forum "European Research: Objective 2010," organized by the CNRS, to take place on July 8-9, 2004, in Paris. Deeply committed to establishing a dialogue between science and society, he was also responsible for the reestablishment of the CNRS Ethics Committee in 2002.

For Bernard Larroutourou, "*Gérard Mégie was an internationally recognized scientist as well as a highly cultivated person, a humanist and a teacher, appreciated by everyone for his open-mindedness, his intellectual discipline and his keen analytical ability. Naturally warm and down-to-earth, Gérard Mégie was always attentive to the*

needs of others. He will be deeply missed by his many friends in the scientific community. His death will leave a void at the head of the CNRS”.

A leading expert on the atmosphere and climate

Gérard Mégie’s research into the physics and chemistry of the Earth’s atmosphere led him to play an essential role in the study of stratospheric ozone. The bulk of his research dealt with the development of original methods for measuring atmospheric variables by laser probe and the modelling of the natural variability of ozone and how it is influenced by human activities. He participated in the implementation of many different means for observing the atmosphere from the ground and from other platforms (airplane, balloon, satellite) and supervised several ozone research projects in the polar regions, the Arctic and Antarctica. He also worked on the links between changes in the chemical composition of the atmosphere and problems related to climate change, as well on as their social and economic impact.

From 1989 to 1991, Gérard Mégie was scientific director of the Department of Earth Sciences and Sciences of the Universe of the Research and Doctoral Studies Division of the French Ministry of Education. In his capacity as teacher-researcher, concerned with the integration of students and the European and international harmonization of degrees and diplomas, Gérard Mégie contributed to the development of the LMD reform (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) and promoted its implementation, leading, in particular, to the concept of "doctoral schools."

An internationally acclaimed scientist

Gérard Mégie made an important contribution to the structuring of environmental and space research, at the national level, within the National Institute for the Sciences of the Universe (INSU/CNRS) and the CNES, as well as at the European and international levels. As a result of the many responsibilities that he held within the National Committee for Scientific Research and his active participation in the Sciences of the Universe Department at the CNRS, Gérard Mégie chaired the specialized Ocean-Atmosphere Commission at INSU from 1991 to 1999. From 1999 to 2000, he chaired the Coordination Committee of Environmental and Planetary Sciences under the supervision of the Ministry of Research. Since 2000, he chaired the Scientific Programs Committee of the CNES. At the international level, he chaired the International Ozone Committee of the International Council for Science (ICSU) from 1988 to 1996, the Earth Observation Committee of the European Space Agency (ESA) from 1994 to 1999, and the "Stratosphere" Scientific Committee of the European Commission (1989-2004). He co-chaired the International Scientific Committee of the Montreal Protocol for the protection of the ozone layer. In this capacity, Gérard Mégie was responsible for the supervision of international reports on the status of the stratospheric ozone layer in 1998 and 2002. He became a member of the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) of the European Commission in 2001 and a member of the European Research Council Expert Group (ERCEG) of the European Union in 2003.

Gérard Mégie was the author of more than 240 scientific publications and two books on stratospheric ozone: *Stratosphère et Couche d’Ozone* (Editions Masson) in 1991 and *Ozone, l’Equilibre Rompu* (Presses du CNRS) in 1989. He was also the

scientific coordinator of two reports of the French Academy of Sciences: *Ozone et Propriétés Oxydantes de la Troposphère* (1993), and *Ozone Stratosphérique* (1998) published by Editions Lavoisier.

He received many prizes and awards for his contributions to science: the CNRS silver medal (1987), the Grand Prix of the International Union of Air Pollution Prevention Associations (1991), the Grand Prix of the French Atomic Energy Commission of the French Academy of Sciences (2001) and the Alfred Wegener Medal of the European Geosciences Union (2004). He was a member of the French Academy of Sciences and several national and international academies. Gérard Mégie was a Chevalier of the French Order of Merit (1990) and Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honor (2001).

Gérard Mégie

- *Born in Paris on June 1, 1946*
- *Graduated from the Ecole Polytechnique in 1965 and received a Ph.D. in science in 1976*
- *CNES research fellow (1968 – 1974)*
- *CNRS attaché, chargé, and maître de recherche, and finally CNRS Research Director (1974 – 1988)*
- *Professor at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie (1988)*
- *Member of the Institut Universitaire de France (1998)*
- *Director of the Aeronomy Department (CNRS/Université Pierre et Marie Curie/Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines) (1996 – 2000)*
- *Until 2000, Director of the Pierre-Simon Laplace Institute for Environmental Sciences (IPLS), which he created in 1991*
- *Chairman of the CNRS (since 2000)*